

URANIUM

Independent Power

SA company installing generators for Namibia desalination project

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South Africa-based company Superwatt is installing generators to power the new seawater desalination plant for Areva and UraMin Namibia's uranium exploration project.

Because Namibia has been faced with a growing water shortage, alternative water sources are needed to sustain the country's mines and population growth.

The Namibian newspaper recently reported that the Swakopmund reservoir was down to a mere 500 m³ of water this past winter, but the country needed at least 11 000 m³ to supply the population.

Seawater desalination is now the number one solution for water provision to mines, which

will assist the country with some relief from the near-drought conditions it has faced in certain areas this year. The new desalination plant, located 30 km north of Swakopmund, will ensure reduced dependence by the mines on the country's water supply.

Swakopmund council CEO **Eckart Demasius** says: "We need to speed up the desalination developments here to make sure we have enough water. More mines are planned that will need more water. The communities are growing and need more water, and the country's current water supply systems are not up to standard."

Superwatt will supply generators to independently power the desalination plant. A

6-MVA synchronised system will be installed, and the company is seeking to have all the generators installed by September to get the plant up and running.

"The generator units are first shipped to Cape Town, where Superwatt's engineers will carry out the testing and predelivery inspection, and configure the synchronisation," says Superwatt director **Patrick Gaertner**.

The first unit has already been delivered to the desalination plant's site, while the second unit has undergone predelivery inspection. The next two units arrived at Superwatt's offices in mid-August.

The power capacity of the 6-MVA synchronised system is adequate to commission the plant in stages until it receives power from NamPower.

Because the Namibian coast has one of the most corrosive climates in the world, the system is fitted with marine-grade equipment, designed for a minimum life cycle of 20 years.

The desalination plant will pump fresh water over 50 km, through two pumpstations, to the uranium mine, which is currently under construction in the Namibian desert.

Construction of the desalination plant has begun and will be completed towards the end of the year.

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OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

Booting out Accidents

Footwear company says reflective gumboots will improve mineworker safety

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INDUSTRIAL footwear company Bata Industrials has enhanced its gumboots in an effort to improve the safety of mineworkers.

Lack of visibility is rarely reported as the direct cause of an accident, but can often be a significant contributory factor. There is little doubt that improving visibility will greatly reduce the potential for accidents.

At the recent Bushveld Safety Forum, in Rustenburg, in the North West province, Bata Industrials – part of the Bata International group – introduced its new improved reflective gumboot.

Bata Industrials brand manager for Africa **Clinton Soutter** reports that the main focus of the modifications are the reflective bands on the the boots, which are clearly visible when light is shone onto them.

At the forum, it was reported that a large



SAFE MARK

Reflective markings on the gumboots will enhance the safety of workers on mines

percentage of the deaths that occur underground are attributable to accidents relating to poor use of reflective safety wear underground. In areas of poor visibility, collisions with locomotives and other equipment used in the mining process are commonplace owing to this.

"Every miner knows that the clothing they wear is a vital part of increasing their personal safety, and high-visibility clothing with reflective elements is adopted as standard issue.

However, due to the nature of the environment in which mining is conducted, clothing often becomes dull and dirty and this is further compounded by the temperature fluctuations from highs, [when] overall tops [are] removed or folded over trousers, to lows, [when] jackets [are] worn. All these factors impact directly on the visibility of the miner in their environment," says Soutter.

An item of clothing that is not often taken off is the gumboot. Soutter remarks that it then makes practical sense to introduce gumboots with reflective bands to make miners more visible in underground situations.

Bata Industrials area manager **Grant Lawless** reports that these reflective bands can be modified to fit in with the company's branding requirements. He adds that the company worked closely with diversified technology company 3M to establish the correct material that is used on the gumboots.

Additional features on the gumboot include a removable inner sole that can be replaced when worn out.

He adds that the company has extended an open opportunity to mining companies to test the gumboots on site.

Soutter reports that the Bata International group made the decision last year to expand aggressively into the industrial market as, with its global experience and knowledge, it felt that it had a lot to offer the market.

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